1	44. A routing system for distributing packets in a network, wherein the packets original
2	nate at a source and are returned to a destination, both source and destination external
3	with respect to the routing system, comprising:
4	a plurality of network interfaces that transfer packets to a destination and from a
5	source;
6	a plurality of route processing engines;
7	a hash mechanism that performs a hashing function on at least a portion of net-
8	work layer information, in the packets transferred to the routing system, to determine an
9	approximately even distribution of the packets to the route processing engines for proc-
10	essing by the engines, and
11	a processing mechanism that determines packets belonging to a same flow and
12	their original order from the network layer information of the packets, the network layer
13	information including at least the same source/destination and protocol,
14	a data transferer that sends each ordered packet flow to a single route processing
15	engine, thereby preserving the original ordered packet flows.
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